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INFO RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L RIYADH 000817

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA/ARP AND EEB/TPP/IPE
PASS TO USTR FOR BUNTIN AND JCHOE-GROVES

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/20/2019
TAGS: [ETRD](#) [ECON](#) [PREL](#) [SA](#) [AE](#)
SUBJECT: NAIF CONFIRMS UAE BORDER DELAYS CAUSED BY NEW
FORMALITIES

REF: ABU DHABI 611

Classified By: CDA Ambassador Richard Erdman for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)
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11. (SBU) In recent comments to the media, Interior Minister Prince Naif Bin Abdul Aziz confirmed the recent delays at the Saudi - UAE land border crossings at Al-Batha and Al-Ghuwaifat were due to the recently-imposed requirement that all first-time entrants to the Kingdom be fingerprinted (see reftel). He denied they had anything to do with the UAE's withdrawal from the GCC monetary union.

12. (U) According to the English-language daily Saudi Gazette, 2,000 trucks were cleared for entry into the Kingdom on Sunday, June 14, while 1,700 were cleared for entry from Saudi Arabia into UAE.

13. (C) Comment: Several reasons for the delays have been circulating around Riyadh in recent days, including Saudi pique at the UAE's decision to withdraw from the monetary union, nebulous references to either the Saudi - UAE land border demarcation or the Saudi - Qatari maritime border demarcation, and Saudi efforts to crackdown on illicit smuggling. While the new immigration requirement is tangentially related to efforts to fight smuggling, these rumors were generally baseless. Old-fashioned inefficiency was largely to blame; and now seems to have been resolved. End comment.
ERDMAN